

Tools and Techniques for Managing Scientific and Technical Information Collaboratively

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Issues Being Addressed

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) colleagues across all media encounter an extraordinary array of challenges centered on the generation, use, and implementation of scientific information. Issues surrounding access to data, disparate interpretations, relevance, adequacy, and competing expertise can complicate a decision-making process.

The Scientific Approach to Resolving the Issue

There is a “toolbox” of approaches that has been used in managing scientifically complex information in decision-making groups. In addition to the tools the attendee may already know, the poster session will be devoted to looking at specific tools such as joint fact finding, situation assessments, use of neutral expertise, and consensus-based mapping.

Partnerships

By their nature, many of the tools used in managing complex scientific and technical information are collaborative. Very often a “substance” expert teams with a “process” expert to engage a group collaboratively.

Impacts

To the extent that science comes down to implementation, there has to be some level of acceptance about the approach we take when addressing an issue so that, ultimately, the science used can be applied in the most environmentally effective way. Impasse over science can delay or completely sidetrack important decision-making. Use of these tools could possibly lead to better acceptance and smoother implementation.